Maximizing Efficiency and Profitability in Your Warehouse & Distribution Operations with Dynamics 365 Business Central

INSIGHT WORKS

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Contents

Who is this whitepaper for?

It's important to note that this whitepaper is specifically tailored to small to medium-sized businesses, including those with limited warehouse and distribution operations. Even if you operate a small stock room, you will benefit from reading this whitepaper. The goal is to provide valuable insights and information for companies looking to optimize their warehouse and distribution operations, regardless of size.

Roles

- Business owners
- C-level executives (CEO, CFO, COO, CRO)
- V-level executives (VP of Operations, VP of Supply Chain, and others)
- Warehouse and distribution managers
- Inventory managers
- Order fulfillment managers
- Operations managers
- IT managers

Business Types

- Small to medium-sized businesses (SMBs)
- Warehousing and distribution companies
- Manufacturing companies with warehouse operations
- Retail businesses with inventory management needs
- E-commerce companies with fulfillment and logistics operations

Should you invest time in reading this whitepaper?

- ✓ Do you work in an industry that includes warehousing and distribution?
- ✓ Are you facing challenges with inventory management, order fulfillment, or forecasting accuracy?
- ✓ Are you outgrowing your current accounting software, such as QuickBooks?
- ✓ Are you interested in learning about a potential solution for warehouse and distribution operations?
- ✓ Do you want to add barcoding and mobile computer functionality to your operations?
- ✓ Are you curious about the benefits of using Microsoft Dynamics 365 Business Central and Insight Works apps?
- ✓ Do you want to improve warehouse and distribution efficiency?
- ✓ Are you interested in learning about potential ROI and cost savings?
- ✓ Do you want to learn about implementing and integrating a new system?
- ✓ Do you want to learn about the everyday challenges of the warehouse and distribution industry and their impact on operations and profitability?

If you answered "yes" to any of these questions, this whitepaper will be helpful to you.
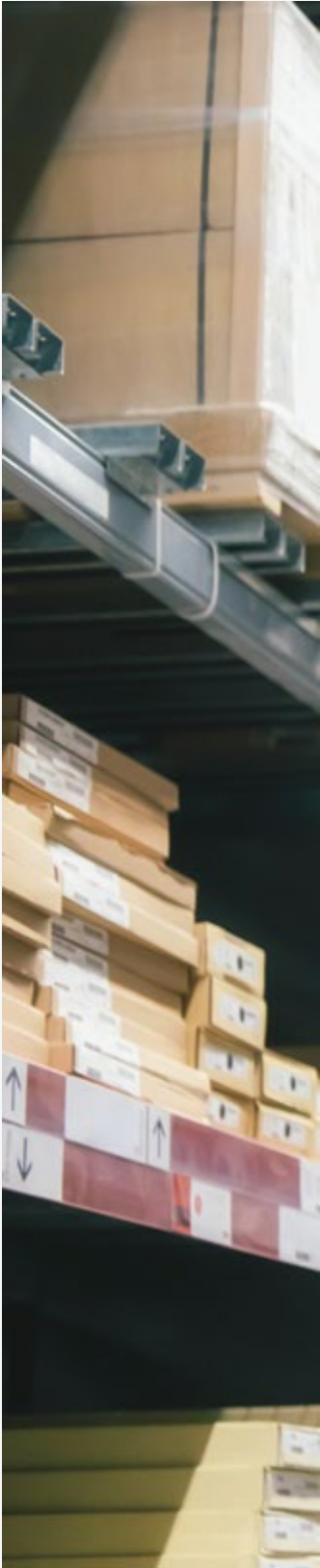
Introduction

This whitepaper highlights warehouse and distribution companies'
challenges and how Dynamics 365 Business Central, Insight Works apps,
and an integrator can address these challenges. You will learn about the
following.

Challenges in Warehouse and Distribution

The whitepaper highlights warehouse and distribution companies'
challenges, including inventory management, order fulfillment, labor
shortages, transportation, and technology and data management. It
stresses that many companies outgrow QuickBooks and require a more
robust solution, such as Dynamics 365 Business Central.

Dynamics 365 Business Central

The paper provides an overview of the benefits of using Business Central,
such as improved inventory management, order fulfillment, and
forecasting accuracy. It emphasizes that Business Central is designed for
SMBs and is priced accordingly, making it an affordable option for
companies looking to optimize their operations.

Insight Works Apps

The whitepaper discusses how Insight Works apps can extend Business
Central's functionality to provide additional warehouse and distribution
management tools, such as barcode scanning and mobile data collection.
It highlights how these apps can help address the specific challenges
warehouse and distribution companies face.

ROI and Cost Savings

The paper outlines the ROI and cost savings of using Business Central and
Insight Works apps. It notes that companies can expect to see significant
improvements in efficiency and accuracy, which can lead to cost savings
and increased profitability.

Getting Started with Business Central and Insight Works

The whitepaper guides getting started with Business Central and Insight Works, including identifying the gaps in Business Central that need to be filled by third-party apps and engaging with a Microsoft Partner to ensure a successful implementation. It also emphasizes the importance of considering associated costs, such as licensing, implementation, training, support, and hardware costs.

Overall, the whitepaper makes a compelling case for using Dynamics 365 Business Central and Insight Works apps to address the challenges warehouse and distribution companies face. It provides a roadmap for getting started with the solution. It emphasizes the importance of engaging with a Microsoft Partner to ensure a successful implementation.

Challenges in Warehouse and Distribution

Warehouse and distribution companies need help managing their operations effectively. This section will discuss some of the common challenges facing the warehouse and distribution industry.

1. **Inventory management**: One of the biggest challenges for SMBs is managing inventory effectively. This can include stockouts, overstocking, inaccurate inventory counts, and difficulty forecasting demand. These issues can lead to lost sales, excess carrying costs, and decreased profitability.
2. **Order fulfillment:** SMBs may struggle with fulfilling orders quickly and accurately, leading to dissatisfied customers and lost sales. This can be particularly challenging for SMBs with limited resources, as they may have a different level of automation or staffing than larger companies.
3. **Labor shortages:** Many SMBs struggle with finding and retaining skilled workers to operate their warehouses. This can lead to increased labor costs, decreased productivity, and difficulty meeting customer demands.
4. **Transportation and logistics:** SMBs may face challenges with transporting goods to and from their warehouse, particularly if they are in remote or rural areas. This can result in increased transportation costs and longer lead times for customers.
5. **Technology and data management:** As warehouse operations become increasingly complex, SMBs may struggle to keep up with the latest technology and data management practices. This can include data silos, outdated software systems, and difficulty integrating different technologies.

Outgrowing QuickBooks

While QuickBooks is a popular choice for many SMBs just starting, companies may need help addressing the common warehouse challenges they may face as they grow and expand their operations.

For example, QuickBooks may not have the advanced inventory management capabilities many warehouse and distribution companies require. It may be unable to track inventory across multiple locations, provide real-time inventory counts, or offer advanced forecasting and replenishment features. This can make it difficult for companies to manage their inventory effectively and efficiently, leading to lost sales or excess carrying costs.

In addition, QuickBooks may not be able to handle the complex order fulfillment processes that many warehouse and distribution companies require. It may be unable to automate the picking, packing, and shipping of orders or provide real-time order tracking and status updates for customers. This can lead to slower fulfillment times and dissatisfied customers.

Furthermore, QuickBooks may not be able to integrate with other technologies or systems that warehouse and distribution companies rely on, such as warehouse management systems (WMS) or transportation management systems (TMS). This can result in data silos and manual processes, leading to errors and inefficiencies.

As a result, many warehouse and distribution companies may need to explore other options as they outgrow QuickBooks. This may include adopting an enterprise resource planning (ERP) system, such as Dynamics 365 Business Central, that offers advanced inventory management, order fulfillment, and integration capabilities. By investing in the right technology, warehouse and distribution companies can improve operations, reduce costs, and increase profitability.
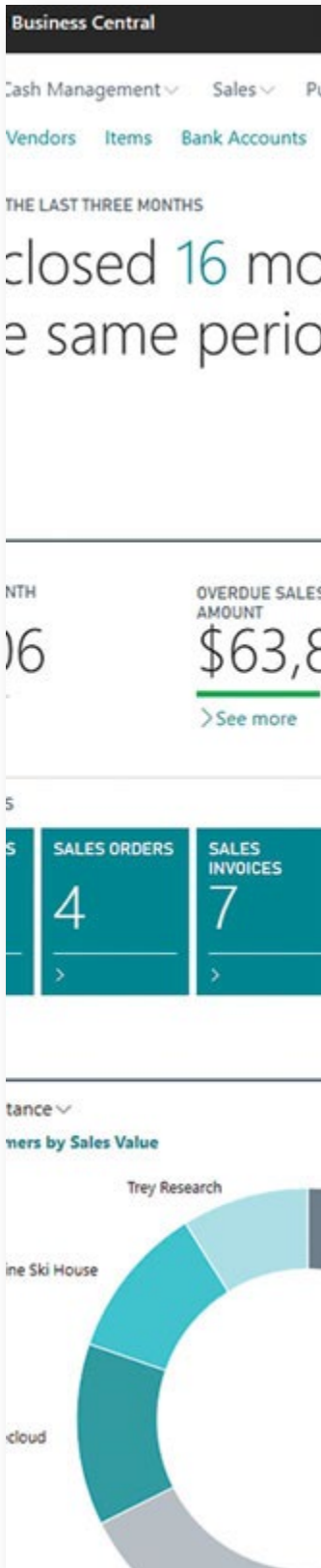
What is Dynamics 365 Business Central

Microsoft Dynamics 365 Business Central is software that simplifies business operations by consolidating all functions in one platform. For warehouse and distribution companies, it enables real-time tracking of inventory levels, orders, and shipments, streamlines order fulfillment, and offers advanced inventory management features like automated replenishment and forecasting. It can integrate with third-party apps to support technologies like barcode scanners or RFID systems to optimize inventory management processes across multiple locations. Providing real-time data insights and automating processes helps reduce costs, increase efficiency, and improve customer satisfaction.

Here are some of the key features of Microsoft Dynamics 365 Business Central for warehouse and distribution companies:

- **Advanced inventory management:** track inventory across multiple locations, automate replenishment, use forecasting features to optimize inventory levels, and integrate with barcode scanners or RFID systems.
- **Warehouse management:** receive, cross-dock, put away, and move items within the warehouse using basic or advanced warehousing features.
- **Bin replenishment:** calculate replenishment for bins based on inventory levels and demand, and plan warehouse movements using worksheets.
- **Order fulfillment:** automate picking, packing, and shipping of orders, provide real-time order tracking and status updates for customers and integrate with shipping carriers or payment gateways.
- **Production planning and control:** plan and manage production orders, create bills of materials, and track the progress of production orders.
- **Reporting and analytics:** generate real-time reports on inventory levels, order fulfillment, and other key performance indicators to help make informed decisions.

We'll look at some of the common issues distribution companies face.

Inventory Management

Dynamics 365 Business Central offers advanced inventory management capabilities to help warehouse and distribution companies optimize inventory levels and reduce carrying costs. Consider the following scenario.

A warehouse and distribution company, XYZ Corp, needs help managing its inventory effectively. The company has experienced stockouts in the past, which have resulted in lost sales and dissatisfied customers. In addition, the company has been carrying excess inventory, which has led to higher carrying costs and decreased profitability.

XYZ Corp has implemented Dynamics 365 Business Central to improve its inventory management processes. With Business Central, XYZ Corp can set up automated inventory replenishment, which can help ensure that the company always has enough inventory to meet demand. Business Central can also provide real-time inventory counts, which can help warehouse workers quickly identify inventory shortages and replenish stock as needed.

Furthermore, Business Central's advanced forecasting features can help XYZ Corp better predict product demand. By analyzing historical sales data and trends, Business Central can provide recommendations for optimal inventory levels and reorder points, which can help the company avoid stockouts and excess inventory.

As a result of implementing Dynamics 365 Business Central, XYZ Corp can optimize its inventory levels and reduce carrying costs. The company has fewer stockouts and can fulfill orders more quickly, leading to increased customer satisfaction and sales. Overall, Business Central's advanced inventory management capabilities help XYZ Corp streamline its operations and increase profitability.

Order fulfillment

Business Central provides robust order fulfillment capabilities to help warehouse and distribution companies fulfill orders quickly and accurately. It can automate the picking, packing, and shipping of orders, provide real-time order tracking and status updates for customers and integrate with other systems, such as shipping carriers or payment gateways, to streamline the fulfillment process. Business Central can also generate picking and packing lists, which can help warehouse workers fulfill orders more efficiently. Consider the following example.

Let's say a warehouse and distribution company, XYZ Corp, needs help to fulfill orders quickly and accurately. The company has been receiving customer complaints about delayed shipments and incorrect orders, which has resulted in lost sales and dissatisfied customers.

XYZ Corp has implemented Dynamics 365 Business Central to improve its order fulfillment processes. With Business Central, XYZ Corp can set up automated order picking, packing, and shipping. This can help warehouse workers fulfill orders more quickly and accurately, reducing the likelihood of errors or delays.

Furthermore, Business Central can provide customers with real-time order tracking and status updates via third-party apps. Customers can view the status of their orders, including estimated delivery dates and shipping carrier information, through a self-service portal. This can reduce the number of customer service inquiries related to order status, freeing up time for customer service representatives to handle more complex issues.

As a result of implementing Dynamics 365 Business Central, XYZ Corp can fulfill orders more quickly and accurately. The company experiences fewer customer complaints and can improve customer satisfaction and retention. Business Central's robust order fulfillment capabilities help XYZ Corp streamline its operations and increase profitability.

Labor shortage

While Business Central cannot directly address labor shortages, it can help companies optimize staffing levels and productivity. Its advanced inventory management and order fulfillment features can help reduce the need for manual labor, and its integration with other systems can help streamline processes and reduce errors.

Let's say a warehouse and distribution company, XYZ Corp, needs help finding and retaining skilled workers to operate its warehouse. The company has had to pay higher wages to attract workers, which has led to increased labor costs.

XYZ Corp has decided to implement Dynamics 365 Business Central to help optimize its staffing levels and improve productivity. With Business Central, XYZ Corp can automate many of its inventory management and order fulfillment processes, reducing the need for manual labor. This can help the company operate more efficiently and reduce its labor costs.

Furthermore, Business Central can provide real-time insights into warehouse operations, which can help XYZ Corp identify areas where it

can improve productivity. By analyzing inventory levels, order fulfillment times, and other key performance indicators, Business Central can help the company identify opportunities to optimize its processes and reduce its reliance on manual labor.

As a result of implementing Dynamics 365 Business Central, XYZ Corp can operate more efficiently and reduce its labor costs. The company can optimize its staffing levels and improve productivity, reducing the need for manual labor. Overall, Business Central helps XYZ Corp address labor shortages and increase profitability.

Transportation and logistics

Business Central offers integration with other systems, such as third-party shipping apps, to help warehouse and distribution companies manage their transportation and logistics operations more effectively. It can provide real-time tracking of shipments, automate shipping label generation, and integrate with shipping carriers to streamline the shipping process.

Let's say a warehouse and distribution company, XYZ Corp, needs help managing its transportation and logistics operations effectively. The company has experienced shipping delays and needed help tracking shipments, leading to dissatisfied customers.

XYZ Corp implements Dynamics 365 Business Central to improve its transportation and logistics operations. With Business Central, XYZ Corp can easily add third-party apps to manage its shipping operations more effectively. Business Central can provide real-time tracking of shipments, automate shipping label generation, and integrate with shipping carriers to streamline the shipping process.

Furthermore, Business Central can help XYZ Corp optimize its shipping operations by providing real-time data insights through Power BI apps. Business Central can help the company identify opportunities to improve its shipping processes and reduce its transportation costs by analyzing shipping costs, delivery times, and other key performance indicators.

As a result of implementing Dynamics 365 Business Central, XYZ Corp can manage its transportation and logistics operations more effectively. The company experiences fewer shipping delays and can track shipments more accurately, leading to increased customer satisfaction. Overall, Business Central helps XYZ Corp streamline its operations and increase profitability.

Technology and data management

Business Central is highly customizable and can be tailored to meet the specific needs of warehouse and distribution companies. It can integrate with other technologies, such as warehouse management systems (WMS) and many other third-party apps, to provide a complete end-to-end solution for warehouse and distribution operations. Business Central also provides real-time data insights, which can help companies make informed decisions about inventory management, order fulfillment, and other aspects of their warehouse operations.

Let's say a warehouse and distribution company, XYZ Corp, needs help managing its technology and data effectively. The company has been using multiple systems to manage its operations, which has led to data silos and manual processes.

XYZ Corp has decided to implement Dynamics 365 Business Central to help manage its technology and data more effectively. With Business Central, XYZ Corp can integrate multiple systems into one platform, providing a single source of truth for all data. This can help the company reduce data silos and manual processes, reducing errors and increasing efficiency.

Furthermore, Business Central can provide real-time data insights, which can help XYZ Corp make informed decisions about its operations. By analyzing inventory levels, order fulfillment times, and other key performance indicators, Business Central can help the company identify areas where it can improve its operations and increase profitability.

As a result of implementing Dynamics 365 Business Central, XYZ Corp can manage its technology and data more effectively. The company experiences fewer errors and can operate more efficiently, increasing profitability. Business Central helps XYZ Corp streamline its operations and improve its data management capabilities.

Summary of Business Central

Dynamics 365 Business Central offers advanced inventory management, robust order fulfillment, and transportation and logistics capabilities to help warehouse and distribution companies streamline operations, reduce labor costs, and increase profitability. It can also integrate with other technologies to provide a complete end-to-end solution and real-time data insights to help companies make informed decisions.

Gaps in Business Central

While Dynamics 365 Business Central offers robust functionality for warehouse and distribution operations, there may be gaps in the system that require additional support. Third-party apps can help fill these gaps, giving companies even greater efficiency and flexibility in managing their operations.

Reasons to consider third-party apps:

- Expand functionality beyond what is offered in Business Central.
- Provide specialized industry solutions for unique business needs.
- Enhance existing processes with automation and workflow management.
- Improve data management and reporting capabilities.
- Reduce costs by avoiding the need to build custom solutions in-house.
- Benefit from continuous development and support by the app provider.
- Integrate seamlessly with Dynamics 365 Business Central.
- Can be easily added or removed to suit changing business needs.

Microsoft AppSource: Extending functionality in Business Central

Microsoft AppSource is an online marketplace for businesses to find and access the applications they need to expand the functionality of their Dynamics 365 Business Central platform. It offers a wide range of apps and solutions that can help businesses fill the gaps in their software and meet their specific needs. With AppSource, companies can quickly discover, try, and purchase apps from trusted Microsoft Independent Software Providers (ISVs). This makes scaling and adapting their software easier as their business grows and changes.

With apps from Microsoft AppSource, you can extend Business Central with added functionality in:

- Accounting & Finance
- Customer Relationship Management (CRM)
- Business Productivity
- Sales & Marketing
- Human Resources (HR)
- Manufacturing
- Project Management
- Supply Chain Management
- Retail & E-commerce
- Analytics & Business Intelligence
- IT & Administration
- Collaboration & Communication
- Security & Compliance
- Industry-specific solutions (e.g., healthcare, education, non-profits)

Business Central Apps from Insight Works

Insight Works is a provider of add-on apps and solutions for Business Central that can help warehouse and distribution companies address the gaps in the system's functionality. Their apps are designed to integrate seamlessly with Business Central, providing additional features and capabilities to help businesses optimize their warehouse and distribution operations.
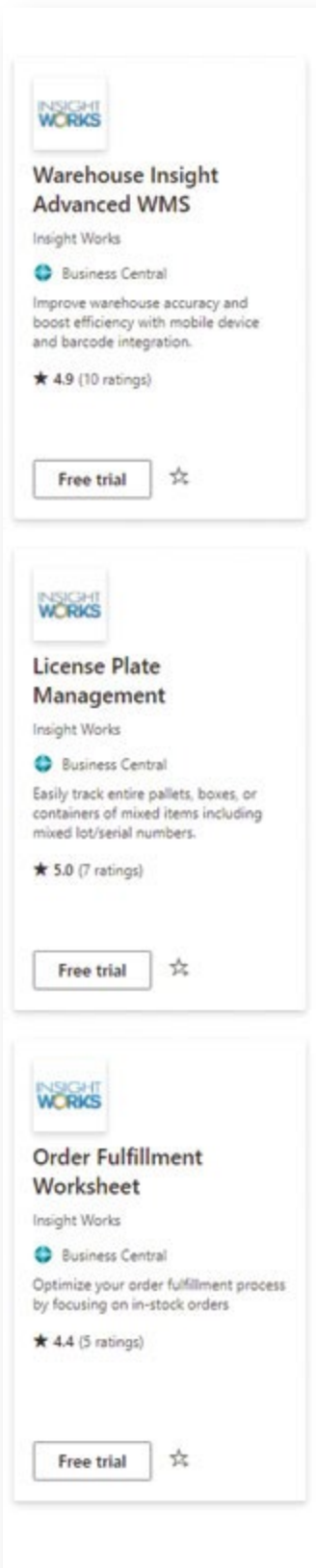
Insight Works' apps are built to work within the Business Central platform, allowing users to manage their warehouse and distribution operations without switching between different software solutions. This integration provides a streamlined workflow to improve productivity, reduce errors, and increase accuracy.

With Insight Works' apps, users can easily access real-time data insights, manage inventory levels, optimize order fulfillment processes, and track shipments. These additional features and capabilities can help small to medium-sized businesses achieve greater efficiency and profitability in their warehouse and distribution operations.

Barcode Integration and Enhanced Warehouse Management Functionality

Warehouse Insight is an add-on app developed by Insight Works for Microsoft Dynamics 365 Business Central. It is designed to help warehouse and distribution companies streamline their operations by providing real-time access to inventory data, barcode scanning capabilities, and advanced warehouse management features.

- **Mobile barcode scanning:** The app allows users to scan barcodes using mobile devices, enabling real-time inventory tracking and reducing errors.
- **Directed picking and put-away:** The app provides directed picking and put-away functionality, making it easier for warehouse staff to locate and move items.
- **Real-time inventory tracking:** With Warehouse Insight, users can track inventory levels in real-time, allowing for better management of stock levels and faster order fulfillment.
- **Bin and location management:** The app provides bin and location management functionality, allowing users to manage and organize their inventory within the warehouse easily.

INSIGHT WORKS

Warehouse Insight Advanced WMS

Insight Works

◆ Business Central

Improve warehouse accuracy and boost efficiency with mobile device and barcode integration.

★ 4.9 (10 ratings)

[Free trial]   ☆

INSIGHT WORKS

License Plate Management

Insight Works

◆ Business Central

Easily track entire pallets, boxes, or containers of mixed items including mixed lot/serial numbers.

★ 5.0 (7 ratings)

[Free trial]   ☆

INSIGHT WORKS

Order Fulfillment Worksheet

Insight Works

◆ Business Central

Optimize your order fulfillment process by focusing on in-stock orders

★ 4.4 (5 ratings)

[Free trial]   ☆

- **Purchase order receiving:** Warehouse Insight simplifies receiving purchase orders by providing real-time updates and enabling users to track items as they arrive.
- **Order fulfillment and shipping:** The app provides order fulfillment and shipping functionality, allowing users to fulfill orders and generate shipping labels quickly and accurately.
- **Data analysis and reporting:** Warehouse Insight includes advanced data analysis and reporting tools, allowing users to analyze inventory and order data to identify trends and optimize operations.

Extend Shipping Functionality with Rate Shopping, Label Generation, and Tracking

Dynamic Ship is an app from Insight Works that enhances the shipping and logistics capabilities of Microsoft Dynamics 365 Business Central. The app provides a range of features that streamline the shipping process and increase efficiency. These features include:

- **Multi-carrier support:** Dynamic Ship supports multiple carriers, allowing users to choose the carrier that best meets their needs.
- **Real-time shipping rates:** The app provides real-time shipping rates, allowing users to compare prices and choose the most cost-effective option.
- **Shipping label generation:** With Dynamic Ship, users can quickly and easily generate shipping labels, eliminating the need for manual entry and reducing errors.
- **Carrier tracking:** The app provides carrier tracking functionality, allowing users to track shipments and provide customers with up-to-date information on the status of their orders.
- **Shipment consolidation:** Dynamic Ship enables users to consolidate multiple orders into a single shipment, reducing shipping costs and simplifying the process.
- **Data analysis and reporting:** The app integrates with Microsoft Power BI, providing even more advanced reporting and data visualization capabilities including advanced data analysis and reporting tools.
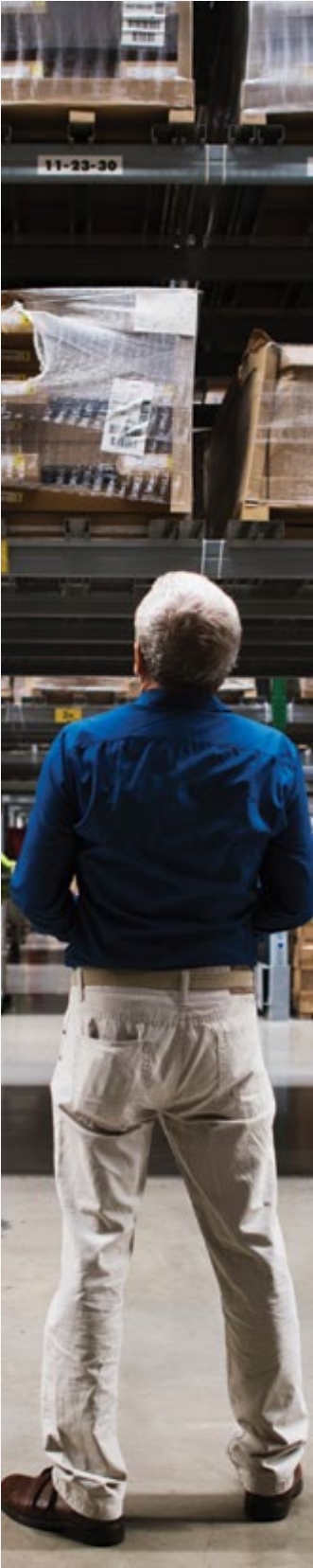
Extend Business Central to include Advanced Inventory and Cycle Counts

Advanced Inventory Count is a powerful app developed by Insight Works that extends the functionality of Microsoft Dynamics 365 Business Central for warehouse and inventory management. The app provides an intuitive interface for performing inventory counts, making it easier and faster for users to track and manage their inventory accurately. Here are some of the key features and benefits of Advanced Inventory Count:

- **Simplified inventory counting:** With Advanced Inventory Count, users can perform inventory counts quickly and easily using various counting methods, including cycle counting, physical counting, and blind counting. The app also supports batch and partial counting, allowing users to count specific inventory sections as needed.
- **Streamlined inventory reconciliation:** Advanced Inventory Count provides real-time updates and reconciliation, allowing users to reconcile inventory counts with actual inventory levels easily. The app also supports variance tracking, allowing users to identify and address discrepancies in inventory levels.
- **Enhanced reporting and analytics:** Advanced Inventory Count includes robust reporting and analytics tools that enable users to analyze inventory data, track inventory trends, and generate reports on inventory levels and counts.
- **Increased efficiency and accuracy:** Advanced Inventory Count helps warehouse and distribution companies increase efficiency and accuracy in their inventory management processes, reducing errors and minimizing the risk of stockouts or overstocks.
- **Improved inventory planning:** With Advanced Inventory Count, users can gain better visibility into their inventory levels and trends, enabling them to make more informed decisions about inventory planning, purchasing, and production.

Order Fulfillment Worksheet for Microsoft Dynamics 365 Business Central

The Order Fulfillment Worksheet app developed by Insight Works is an essential tool for warehouse and distribution companies that use Microsoft Dynamics 365 Business Central. The app provides an intuitive interface for streamlining order fulfillment processes and prioritizing which orders to fill. Here are some of the key features and benefits of the Order Fulfillment Worksheet app:

- **Efficient order fulfillment:** The app helps users fill orders by providing real-time information on what items can be shipped today, including full or partial shipments and backorders. With a simple mouse click, the app automatically creates and combines warehouse shipments and picks, reducing the time and effort needed for order fulfillment.
- **Easy order prioritization:** The app provides an easy way to prioritize outstanding orders based on various criteria, such as customer, region, carrier, or planned ship date. Users can quickly filter and sort outstanding orders from a single screen in Business Central.
- **Effective backorder management:** The app makes backorder management easy by providing detailed order line item information, enabling users to quickly identify backorders that can now be filled. Suppose there is still insufficient stock to fill all orders. In that case, orders can be prioritized by the oldest orders getting filled first. Alternatively, stock can be split across multiple orders.
- **Grouping by carrier:** The app enables users to filter outstanding orders while sorting by carrier service for those with a daily set pick-up time for specific carriers. This feature ensures that all orders are ready in time for pick-up, increasing efficiency and customer satisfaction.
- **Quick identification of order issues:** The app provides order line item detail for every order, making it easy to understand what prevents an order from being filled. This information can help streamline the order fulfillment process and reduce delays.

Case Studies

Horizon Stone: Outgrowing QuickBooks: A Manufacturing Company's Journey to Dynamics 365 Business Central

Horizon Stone, a natural stone supplier, faced challenges with their inventory management system, which could not keep up with its growing business needs. They needed a more robust solution to manage their warehouse operations, so they turned to Microsoft Dynamics 365 Business Central and Insight Works apps.

Horizon Stone implemented Warehouse Insight and Advanced Inventory Count apps to streamline warehouse operations, optimize inventory tracking, and improve efficiency. With Warehouse Insight, they could track inventory levels in real-time, automate order fulfillment and shipping, and reduce errors in inventory management. The Advanced Inventory Count app simplified the inventory counting process, providing a faster and more accurate way to reconcile inventory levels.

As a result of implementing these apps, Horizon Stone was able to improve their warehouse operations, reduce inventory discrepancies, and increase productivity. They also gained better visibility into their inventory levels, enabling them to make informed decisions about purchasing and production planning.

Overall, Horizon Stone's implementation of Business Central and Insight Works apps demonstrates how these tools can help warehouse and distribution companies optimize their operations, increase efficiency, and improve their bottom line.

Read the entire case study:
https://www.dmsiworks.com/horizon-case-study/
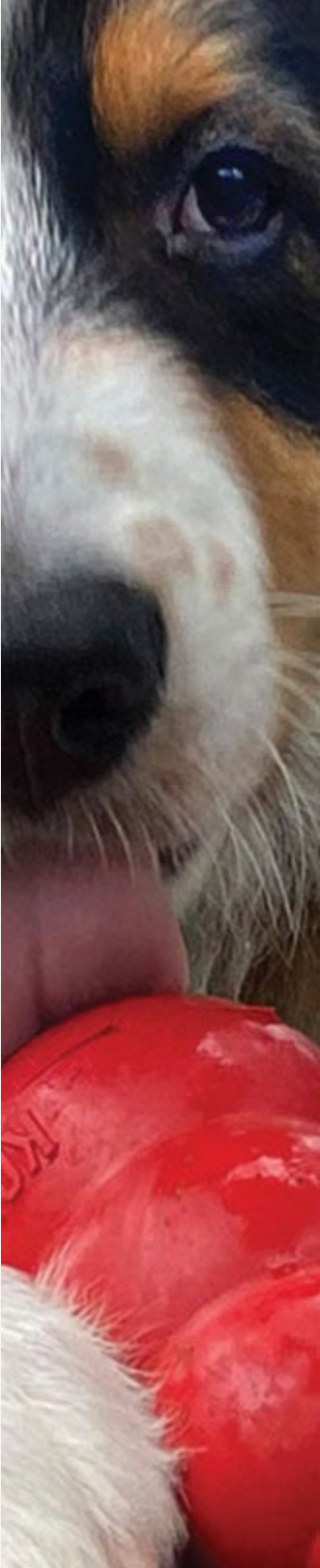
Insight Works' Add-Ons Enhance Inventory Management at KONG

KONG, a global organization that manufactures pet toys and treats, faced challenges in maintaining accurate inventory counts due to the limitations of its existing software tools and processes. They overstocked to compensate for the lack of real-time visibility into inventory levels. Inventory counts took an entire year to complete, resulting in inaccurate inventory records—additionally, new staff required up to two weeks of training to perform inventory counts.

KONG integrated Insight Works' Warehouse Insight and Advanced Inventory Count apps for Microsoft Dynamics 365 Business Central to overcome these challenges, replacing its homegrown ERP system. The apps simplified inventory and cycle counts, and real-time data recording enabled KONG to perform weekly cycle counts, reducing count time by over 90% and significantly reducing counting errors using handheld mobile computers.

As a result, KONG achieved overall time savings, improved inventory management efficiencies, and significant labor cost savings. They also experienced secondary benefits, such as multiple people being able to perform inventory simultaneously, reduced counting errors, and more accurate and timely shipments.

Read the entire case study:
https://www.dmsiworks.com/kong-case-study/

ROI and Cost Savings

Investing in a new ERP system like Microsoft Dynamics 365 Business Central can be a significant decision for any business, especially for small to medium-sized enterprises. Therefore, it's essential to understand the potential return on investment (ROI) that Business Central can offer.

- **Increased productivity:** With streamlined processes and real-time data, businesses using Business Central can see an increase in productivity by up to 50%. This can translate to significant cost savings and increased revenue.
- **Reduced errors and waste:** By eliminating manual processes and introducing automation, businesses can reduce errors and waste in their operations, leading to up to 20% cost savings.
- **Improved inventory management:** Business Central provides real-time visibility into inventory levels and trends, allowing businesses to optimize their inventory levels and reduce carrying costs. This can lead to a reduction in inventory carrying costs by up to 30%.
- **Faster order fulfillment:** Businesses can significantly reduce order processing times and improve customer satisfaction by using Business Central's order fulfillment features coupled with the Insight Works app. This can increase order fulfillment speed by 15-20%.
- **Better decision-making:** With access to real-time data and advanced analytics tools, businesses can make more informed decisions that positively impact their bottom line. This can result in a 10-15% increase in revenue.
- **Reduced IT costs:** With Business Central being a cloud-based solution, businesses can eliminate the need for costly hardware and IT infrastructure, resulting in significant cost savings.
- **Increased accuracy and compliance:** With Business Central's advanced reporting and compliance features, businesses can ensure greater accuracy and compliance in their financial reporting and tax filings, reducing the risk of costly fines and penalties.

Businesses using Business Central can see an ROI of up to 300% within the first three years of implementation, with ongoing cost savings and revenue growth over time.

# Getting Start with Business Central and Insight Works

When considering implementing Business Central with apps from Insight Works, companies need to understand that this is not a quick-fix solution. It requires a commitment to the process and an investment in time, resources, and expertise. The process of implementing a new system and integrating it with existing processes can be complex and time-consuming. It requires careful planning, testing, and training to ensure a successful transition.

Additionally, companies need to understand that there may be unexpected challenges and setbacks along the way. However, with the right approach and the support of a Microsoft Partner, the benefits of implementing Business Central with apps from Insight Works can far outweigh the initial investment. Companies can expect increased efficiency, accuracy, and productivity, as well as improved inventory management and order fulfillment.

Implementation and Integration

Implementing Business Central with Insight Works apps is a process that requires careful planning and execution to ensure success. The following checklist outlines the main steps in implementing this solution, from preparing your warehouse to integrating with third-party hardware.

While it may seem daunting, working with a trusted partner and following a structured approach can make the process smoother and more manageable, ultimately leading to increased efficiency and productivity in your warehouse operations.
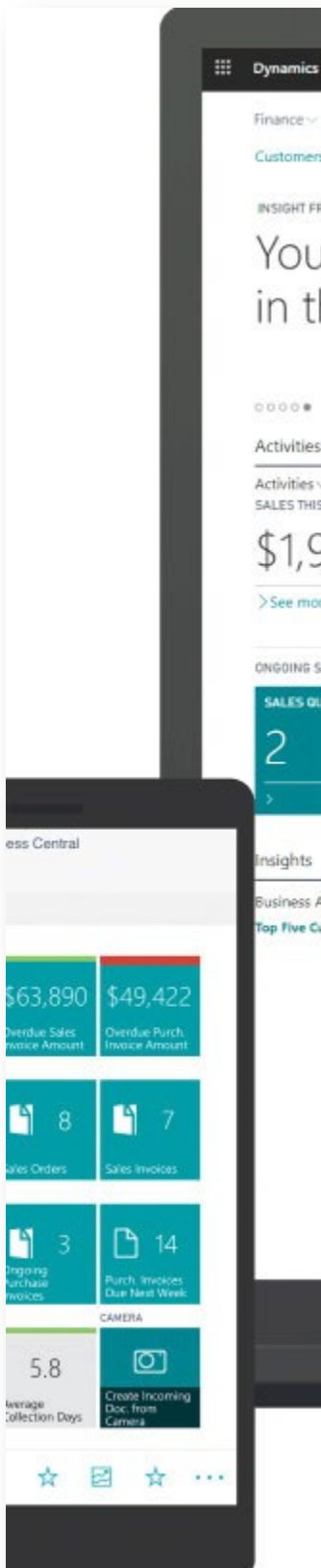
Here is a high-level overview of the process:

1. **Pre-implementation assessment:** Before implementing Business Central with apps from Insight Works, it's important to conduct a thorough evaluation to determine your company's specific needs and requirements. This includes assessing your warehouse and inventory management processes and the potential use of barcodes and mobile computer hardware.

2. **Customization and Configuration:** The next step is to customize and configure Business Central to meet your company's specific needs once the assessment is complete. This includes configuring the system to support your inventory management processes and integrating Insight Works apps to enhance functionality.

3. **Data Migration:** If transitioning from a legacy system, you must migrate your data to Business Central. This process involves extracting data from your legacy system and importing it into Business Central, ensuring accuracy and consistency.

4. **Testing and Training:** Once the system is configured and the data is migrated, it's important to thoroughly test it to ensure it works as expected. You'll also need to provide training to your employees to ensure they're familiar with the system and its features.

5. **Go-Live and Support:** Once testing and training are complete, it's time to go live with the system. It's important to have ongoing support to address any issues that may arise and ensure the system continues to meet your company's needs.

6. **Continuous Improvement:** Business Central and Insight Works apps provide a solid warehouse and inventory management foundation, but there's always room for improvement. Ongoing assessments and adjustments can help your company optimize its processes and achieve greater efficiencies.

Engaging with a Microsoft Partner

Working with a Microsoft Partner can bring significant advantages to businesses looking to integrate Business Central with apps from Insight Works. These partners possess specialized industry knowledge, technical expertise, and experience with both Business Central and Insight Works, making them invaluable resources for companies seeking to optimize their operations. Here are some of the benefits of working with a Microsoft Partner:

- **Access to specialized expertise:** Microsoft Partners have a deep understanding of Business Central and Insight Works, allowing them to guide how to optimize the use of these tools to meet specific business needs.
- **Industry knowledge:** Microsoft Partners have experience working with companies in various industries and can provide insights and best practices tailored to a particular industry's unique requirements.
- **Technical expertise:** Integrating Business Central with Insight Works requires technical knowledge and experience with both systems. A Microsoft Partner can provide the necessary technical support and troubleshooting to ensure seamless integration.
- **Customization:** Microsoft Partners can help businesses customize Business Central and Insight Works apps to fit their unique needs and workflows, ensuring maximum efficiency and productivity.
- **Continuous support:** A Microsoft Partner can provide ongoing support and maintenance, ensuring that the integration of Business Central and Insight Works continues to meet business needs over time.

The Path to Success Checklist

Implementing Business Central and 3rd party apps can be a complex process that requires careful planning and execution to ensure success. Here is a checklist of seven best practices that can help companies achieve a successful implementation:

- **Define clear business objectives:** Before beginning the implementation process, it is important to define clear business objectives for the project. This will help ensure that everyone involved in the implementation is on the same page and that the project stays focused.
- **Involve key stakeholders:** It is important to involve key stakeholders in the implementation process, including executives, managers, and end-users. This will help ensure that everyone's needs are taken into account and that the solution is designed to meet the needs of the business as a whole.
- **Plan for change management:** Implementing new software can be a significant change for a company, and it is important to plan for change management. This includes providing training and support to end-users and communicating the benefits of the new solution.
- **Understand data migration:** Data migration is critical to any implementation project. It is important to understand the data that needs to be migrated and any potential issues or challenges that may arise during the migration process.
- **Test and validate the solution:** Before going live with the solution, it is important to test and validate it to ensure that it meets the business's needs and that there are no critical issues or bugs that need to be addressed.
- **Leverage the expertise of a Microsoft Partner:** Working with a Microsoft Partner can help ensure a successful implementation. Partners have deep expertise in Business Central and Insight Works' apps and experience with similar implementation projects.
- **Continuously evaluate and improve:** After the solution is live, it is essential to constantly assess and improve it to ensure that it meets the needs of the business. This includes gathering feedback from end-users and identifying opportunities for optimization and improvement.

About ACE Micro, a leading Microsoft Partner in Distribution

ACE Micro is a Microsoft Partner with deep expertise in implementing Business Central and Insight Works' apps for distribution companies. As a leading provider of business management solutions, ACE Micro offers a range of services to help these companies optimize their operations and drive growth. Here are some key reasons why a distribution company might choose ACE Micro to implement Business Central and Insight Works' apps:

Expertise and experience: ACE Micro has years of experience implementing Business Central and Insight Works' apps for various distribution companies. Their team of experts can provide guidance and best practices to help ensure a successful implementation.

Industry-specific knowledge: ACE Micro deeply understands the needs and challenges of distribution companies. They can provide tailored solutions to meet the unique needs of these businesses, including inventory management, order processing, and more.

Comprehensive services: Besides implementation services, ACE Micro offers various services to help distribution companies maximize their investment in Business Central and Insight Works' apps. These services include training, support, and ongoing optimization and improvement.

Focus on customer success: ACE Micro is dedicated to the success of its distribution customers. They work closely with each company to ensure that their solution meets their business needs and drives growth and efficiency.

Associated Costs

Implementing Business Central and Insight Works' warehouse and distribution management apps can provide significant benefits. Still, it's important to consider the associated costs. Fortunately, Business Central offers a subscription-based pricing model that can be more cost-effective than a perpetual model that includes annual support fees. Here are some factors to consider when planning for the costs of implementing Business Central and Insight Works' apps:

- **Licensing costs:** Business Central has various licensing options, including Essentials and Premium. The cost will depend on the number of users and the features required.
- **Implementation costs:** Implementing Business Central and Insight Works' apps can be complex, and it's important to work with an experienced partner who can help guide the implementation process. The cost will depend on the project scope, the customization level required, and other factors.
- **Training costs:** Training end-users is integral to the implementation process and can help ensure the solution is used effectively. The cost will depend on the number of users and the level of training required.
- **Support costs:** Ongoing support is critical to ensuring the long-term success of the solution. The cost will depend on the support level required and the support contract's length.
- **Hardware costs:** Besides software costs, it's essential to consider the hardware required to support Business Central and Insight Works' apps. This includes barcode scanners, mobile computers, label printers, and other equipment. The type and quantity of hardware required will depend on the number of users and the environmental conditions.

Companies can avoid the upfront costs associated with perpetual licenses and annual support fees by using a subscription-based pricing model. With a subscription, the cost is spread over time, making it more manageable for SMBs. Additionally, the subscription model allows companies to easily add or remove users and features as needed, allowing for greater flexibility and scalability. For specific pricing information, it's best to contact a Microsoft Partner.
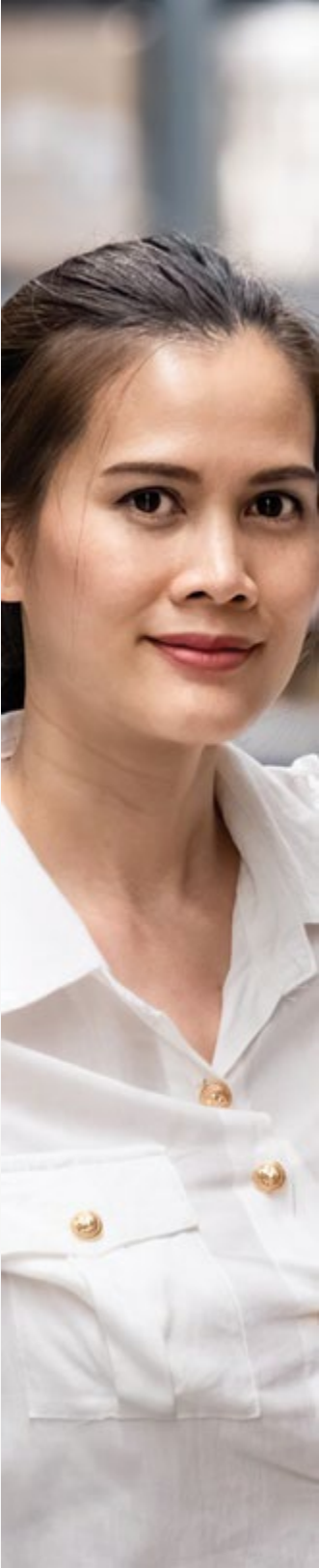
Conclusion

Warehouse and distribution companies face numerous challenges, including inventory management, order fulfillment, labor shortages, transportation, and technology and data management. Dynamics 365 Business Central is a robust solution designed for SMBs that can help address these challenges. It offers improved inventory management, order fulfillment, and forecasting accuracy. Insight Works apps can extend functionality with tools like barcode scanning and mobile data collection.

Using Dynamics 365 Business Central and Insight Works apps can lead to significant ROI and cost savings for warehouse and distribution companies. By improving efficiency and accuracy, these tools can increase profitability and help companies stay competitive. It's important to consider associated costs like licensing, implementation, training, support, and hardware when implementing these solutions.

To get started with Dynamics 365 Business Central and Insight Works, it's essential to identify gaps in Business Central that need to be filled by third-party apps and to engage with a Microsoft Partner to ensure a successful implementation. Companies that use these solutions can experience increased efficiency, reduced costs, and improved profitability. If you're a warehouse or distribution company facing these challenges, consider using Dynamics 365 Business Central and Insight Works to optimize your operations and stay ahead of the competition.

Additional Resources

Microsoft Dynamics 365 Business Central
https://dynamics.microsoft.com/en-us/business-central/

Microsoft AppSource
https://appsource.microsoft.com/

Microsoft Partner ACE Micro
https://www.acemicrotech.com/

Apps from Insight Works
https://iwx.app/

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Appendix 1: Should you consider using Business Central?

The following checklist can be helpful to determine if Business Central is right for you.

1. Are we struggling to manage inventory levels, leading to stockouts, overstocking, and decreased profitability?
2. Are we having difficulty fulfilling orders accurately and efficiently, leading to dissatisfied customers and lost sales?
3. Do we need help accurately forecasting demand, resulting in excess carrying costs or missed sales opportunities?
4. Are we experiencing difficulty finding and retaining skilled workers to operate our warehouse, leading to increased labor costs and decreased productivity?
5. Are transportation costs and lead times impacting our customer service levels and profitability?
6. Are our data management practices up-to-date and able to support our business needs?
7. Are we using outdated software systems, limiting our ability to grow and adapt to changing business needs?
8. Are we experiencing difficulty integrating different technologies, such as barcode scanning, mobile data collection, and EDI?
9. Are we using multiple disconnected systems to manage different aspects of our business, leading to data silos and inefficiencies?
10. Are we manually entering data into our systems, leading to errors and inefficiencies?
11. Do we lack visibility into inventory levels, order status, and other critical business data?
12. Are we using paper-based systems to manage warehouse operations, leading to inefficiencies and errors?
13. Are we spending too much time on manual tasks like data entry and reporting?
14. Do we lack access to real-time data that can help us make better business decisions?
15. Are we missing opportunities to optimize our operations and drive growth?
16. Are we struggling to keep up with the latest technology trends in our industry?
17. Are we experiencing difficulty scaling our business to meet growing demand?
18. Are we concerned about data security and compliance with industry regulations?
19. Are we experiencing increasing competition and pressure to differentiate ourselves from other companies in our industry?
20. Are we interested in exploring new solutions that can help us improve our efficiency, accuracy, and profitability?

Appendix 2: Evaluating a Microsoft Partner

The following checklist can be used when evaluating a Microsoft Partner:

1. How many years of experience do you have implementing Business Central and Insight Works for distribution companies?
2. Can you provide case studies or references from other distribution companies you have worked with?
3. What is your approach to project management for implementing Business Central and Insight Works?
4. How do you ensure the solution is tailored to meet our business needs?
5. What level of customization can be achieved with Business Central and Insight Works apps?
6. How do you handle data migration from our existing system to Business Central?
7. How do you ensure the solution integrates with our existing software and systems?
8. How do you train end-users on using Business Central and Insight Works apps?
9. What level of ongoing support do you provide after the solution is live?
10. How do you ensure the security of our data in the cloud-based solution?
11. How do you handle hardware requirements such as mobile computers and label printers?
12. Can you guide us on optimizing warehouse layout and processes for maximum efficiency?
13. Do you have experience working with our industry's specific challenges, such as perishable goods or regulated products?
14. Can you provide guidance on how to scale and expand the solution as our business grows?
15. What are your Microsoft competencies and certifications related to Business Central and Insight Works?
16. What is your team's expertise with regard to Business Central and Insight Works?
17. How do you ensure that the solution meets regulatory compliance requirements?
18. What is your approach to change management for implementing new software?
19. How do you gather end-user feedback and continuously evaluate and improve the solution?
20. What is your process for handling unexpected issues or problems that may arise during the implementation process?